

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5389

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T BEIRUT 9187

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: ROUND ROBIN WITH FRANGIE

REF: BEIRUT 8928

1. HAD ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTE TALK ALONE YESTERDAY, JULY 17, WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE BEFORE MY WIFE AND I HAD FAMILY LUNCHEON AT EHDEN. BEGAN BY EXPRESSIING PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY'S THANKS FOR GOL'S OBTAINING RELEASE COLONEL MORGAN. FRANGIE SAID THIS WAS THE LEAST THAT GOL COULD DO IN CONNECTION WITT THIS DEPLORABLE INCIDENT AND INQUIRED WHETHER KIDNAPPERS HAD RAISED WITH MORGAN CEN TO ACTIVITIES OR PROGRAMS. TOLD PRESIDENT THAT AS FAR AS I WAS AWARE CEN TO MATTERS HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING INTERROGA-TION AND THERE WERE NO NON-ARABS, I.E. SOVIETS, CHINESE, OR OTHER COMMUNISTS INVOLVED IN INTERROGATION. PRESIDENT SAID THIS NEWS WAS A GREAT PERSONAL RELIEF TO HIM.

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2. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED DISTRUST OF SOVIETS, CITING RECENT TWO

HOUR CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR SOLDATOV, MOSTLY DEVOTED TO WHETHER SOVIET UNION SUPPORTED LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY. FRANGIE SAID HE HAD CITED IZVESTIA ARTICLE SUPPORTING LCP AND ASKED SOLDATOV IF THIS REPRESENTED NEW SOVIET POLICY, FOR SOLDATOV'S PREDECESSOR AZIMOV HAD ALWAYS ASSURED FRANGIE THAT SOVIET UNION NOT REPEAT NOT SUPPORTING LCP. SOLDATOV RESPONDED CITING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS SOVIET UNION AND ONE SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE WHAT ONE READS IN SOVIET JOURNALS. FRANGIE SAID THIS MAY APPLY TO PRAVDA, BUT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT OF IZVESTIA, THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL. COMMENT: I AM SURPRISED THAT SOLDATOV COULD NOT HAVE COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER, FOR FRANGIE SAID THEY DISCUSSED THIS FOR NEARLY AN HOUR AND A HALF AND IT OBVIOUS HE ENJOYED IMMENSELY BAITING SOVIET AMBASSADOR.

3. FRANGIE ATTRIBUTES RECENT TURMOIL BEIRUT TO LEFT-RIGHT CONFRONTATION AND MINIMIZED CONFESSIONAL ASPECTS. I DID NOT FIND THIS AT ALL CONVINCING, FOR SUBSEQUENTLY AT LUNCHEON FRANGIE AND HIS WIFE TOOK AS HARD A LINEA MARONITE POSITION AS I HAVE EVER HEARD. FRANGIE PARTICULARLY BITTER ABOUT RECENT FIGHTING, "EVEN IN THE CAPITAL OF MY COUNTRY". STATED THAT WIIHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS OR SO HE WOULD "HAVE IT OUT WITH ARAFAT". WHAT THIS MEANS FRANGIE DID NOT ELABORATE ON, FOR IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERYING HE MERELY SAID THAT CURRENT SITUATION INTOLERABLE AND MUST BE RECTIFIED.

4. NOTWITHSTANDING THIS ATTITUDE FRANGIE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SPOKE WARMLY OF ARAFAT PERSONALLY, SAYING "WE MUST SUPPORT THIS MAN IN HIS STRUGGLE WITH THE LEFT."

5. FRANGIE MENTIONED BRIEFLY THE JIDDA CONFERENCE OF ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS. HE ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT OF EXPELLING ISRAEL FROM THE UN, TO WHICH I RESPONDED IT WAS THE STUPIDEST THING I COULD ENVISAGE. I POINTED OUT SOME OF THE REASONS FOR THIS VIEW, BUT FRANGIE CUT ME SHORT, SAYING HE AGREED COMPLETELY BUT THERE WAS LITTLE LEBANON COULD DO AGAINST ARAB BANDWAGON PSYCHOLOGY. DURING PRIVATE CONVERSATION AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT LUNCHEON THERE WAS GENERAL DISCUSSION OF OVERALL MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION WITH FRANGIE REPEATING HIS PRAISE OF SADAT AND

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NECESSITY THAT SADAT BE SUPPORTED BY ALL MODERATE ELEMENTS. HE INQUIRED AS TO OUR APPRAISAL EGYPTIAN ACTION RE UN FORCES I DREW UPON SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS CARRIED WIRELESS FILE BUT OPINED THAT DOOR DID NOT APPEAR TOTALLY CLOSED TO UN FORCES REMAINING SINAI. FRANGIE AGREED, ADDING HE DID NOT BELIEVE SADAT WOULD CLOSE ALL DOORS AT SUCH A DELICATE MOMENT.

6. FRANGIE'S HEALTH OBVIOUSLY BENEFITTING FROM INVIGORATING

EHDEN MOUNTAIN SURROUNDINGS. HE JOKED AND WAS AS JOVIAL AS
I HAVE SEEN HIM. HE IS, HOWEVER, DEEPLY CONCERNED RE LEBANESE
SITUATION TODAY AND I COULD NOT HELP GAINING IMPRESSION THAT
LEBANON'S PROBLEMS TOTALLY SURPASS HIS INTELLECT AND HE HAS NOTHING
CONSTRUCTIVE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SOLUTION AT THIS TIME.
I WAS ALSO DISTRESSED WITH HIS REPEATING ULTRA-HARD LINE PHALANGE
VERSIONS OF THE AIN RUMANNEH SHOOTOUT AND OTHER RECENT EVENTS.
HE STRUCK ME AS MORE AND MORE A SMALL TIME CHRISTIAN LEADER
AND NOT THE PRESIDENT OF ALL THE LEBANESE.
GODLEY

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